

NOTES OF MEETING

CROSS BOUNDARY MEMBERS' REFERENCE GROUP

23rd June 2008

MKP OFFICES

Attendees:

Members

CLlr Fiona Chapman	Mid Beds DC (chair)
CLlr Cec Tallack	MKC / SEERA
CLlr Douglas McCall	MKC
CLlr David Polhill	Bucks CC
CLlr Carole Paternoster	AVDC
CLlr Tony Duggan	Beds CC
Malcolm Brighton	MKPC
Andrew Peck	MKPC
CLlr Martin Tett	Bucks CC

Officers

Trevor Saunders	Mid Beds DC
Nicola Dilley	Mid Beds DC
Ian Haynes	MKC
Bruce Stewart	MKC
Diane Webber	MKC
Rachel Jones	BCC
Marcus Rogers	BCC
Andy Barton	AVDC
Sheila Keene	MKP
Cheryl Montgomery	MKP

Regional organisations

Neil McKillen	GO - East
Chris Woolf	GOSE
Mark Williams	SEERA
Gareth Ralphs	SEEDA

EP National Consultancy Unit

Louise Wyman
Dinah Roake

Item No.		Action
1	<b>Welcome / introductions / apologies</b>	
2	<b>Election of chair for the meeting</b> It was agreed that CLlr Chapman would chair the meeting and that the chair would rotate around the local authorities.	<b>MBDC</b>
	MKC to take the minutes of the meeting.	<b>MKC</b>
3	<b>Minutes of 28th February 2008 meeting</b>	
3.1	Ian Haynes covered the action points – all had been met apart from 7.3.3 (due to the delay in the publication of the Proposed Changes to the South East Plan). The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.	

## 4 Presentation on Housing Density

4.1 Sheila Keene introduced the presentation – purpose was to inform the Members about the implications of the housing densities that were emerging from the GVA Study.

### 4.2 Presentation by Dinah Roake and Louise Wyman, EP National Consultancy Unit

The presentation outlined the key points:

- The average residential density is made up of parcels at different densities, together with some mixed use and vertical mixing
- Definition of residential density – what is and is not included in calculations of net density.
- A key point is that the density gives no indication of occupancy rates, building heights, style, quality or size of dwellings. ]
- There are other ways of defining residential density which can give a more reliable prediction of population capacity.
- Northstowe example used to show how the use of residential development parcels can show housing yield from a variety of densities. The same approach was then applied to the SDAs.
- Examples followed from a number of developments taken from Housing Design Awards winners, including Upton, Northampton, showing development at increasing densities – from c 33 dph up to c 150dph (Ingress Park, Greenhithe).
- Walkable neighbourhoods – using an 800 metre radius circle gives an area of 200 ha within a 10 minute direct walking distance. Using a range of densities it is possible to predict the population size for that area and determine the critical mass and footfall that will make services viable.

#### Local examples

Three short presentations followed with examples of developments in Aylesbury Vale, Mid Beds and Milton Keynes showing how

- Context is used to determine range of densities across a site
- Use of masterplanning process – development frameworks, design guides and design codes to implement the design philosophy.
- High densities often already exist in old areas – eg Aylesbury old town.

### 4.3 Members' questions and discussion

Malcolm Brighton: whilst it is useful to see the examples, the ratio between cars and buildings seems low - is this because the photographs were taken when the site was underoccupied or during the day when residents were out. Experience in Milton Keynes is that there can be problems with on-street parking blocking the roads.

- 4.4 This comment was echoed by Cllr McCall who had personal experience that people were reluctant to use parking courts and preferred to park on street outside their home.
- 4.5 Andy Barton: on Fairford Leys, part of the site copes well with parking, but there are still issues to be learnt from all examples.
- 4.6 Louise Wyman: EP have produced a parking design guide – “What Works Where?”
- 4.7 Dinah Roake: parking doesn’t necessarily impact on densities – it is possible to achieve 2 car parking spaces per dwelling even with fairly high densities.
- 4.8 **ITEM NOTED – No action required**

**5. Joint working and decision making discussion paper**

- 5.1 Ian Haynes introduced the item. Welcome the commitment to continuing joint working in this area. Milton Keynes Council has a new post to facilitate joint working between all parties. There are many levels of joint working - from informal discussions to joint committees. There is also encouragement from Government to deliver growth through joint working.
- 5.2 Arrangement for the two SDAs will be different because of their different circumstances. There is however common ground between us all – seeking good quality development which fits well with the existing city; quality services and landscaping etc. Joint working can also help us in our dealings with developers - whether we achieve a jointly agreed position on development or an understanding of areas of difference between us this helps to present a unified stance to developers.

**Members’ questions and discussion**

- 5.3 Cllr Tallack: whilst the discussion paper is useful there is no need in the immediate short to medium term to establish formal structures for joint working. There is time for the approach to evolve and be informed by the structures that are being established elsewhere in the MKSM area. Also the number of local authorities involved will change as Central Bedfordshire is created.
- 5.4 Neil McKillen: indicated that there was no immediate need to agree a formal structure for joint working before 2011. The GO East view is that any SE SDA housing allocation in Mid Beds needs to be considered through a partial review of the East of England Plan. Stressed the value of joint working – devolving decision making to a formal joint committee would allow for decision making and infrastructure provision across the whole site to be made on a consistent basis.

- 5.5 Trevor Saunders: the first piece of work required for the SE SDA will be to prepare a clear policy framework to guide the development as the part within Milton Keynes needs to be brought forward early - over the period 2011-2016. MBDC will need to refer to the SE SDA in their LDF prior to the East of England Plan being amended.
- 5.6 Ian Haynes: a further imperative for starting work on the SE SDA at an early stage is the need to resolve the situation relating to the Strategic Reserve Areas where MKP had recently refused planning permission on the basis of prematurity and the landowners were pressing for a policy framework to be put in place.
- 5.7 Cllr Paternoster: as all of the development planned for the SW SDA lies within Aylesbury Vale / Bucks County Council there is no need for a joint DPD. Aylesbury Vale has two development control committees to deal with strategic sites and day to day applications and is well placed to deal with the growth. Aylesbury Vale Advantage will get involved in cross-boundary working with MKP and look at delivery of infrastructure especially an assessment of the impact of development on the A421.
- Members recognised that cross boundary issues covered more than just transport. Joint working will be necessary on the Tariff #2, e.g. to deal with East-West rail; the Aylesbury Vale tariff and to consider which services in Milton Keynes will be used by residents of the SDA.
- 5.8 Ian Haynes: common ground exists between all of the local authorities that it is useful for Members and officers to continue to meet. Aylesbury Vale Advantage should be invited to attend future officer and member meetings.
- 5.9 Cllr Paternoster: each individual local authority will have to take their own decisions on joint working.
- 5.10 Neil McKillen: in Luton and South Beds they have made use of Section 29 of the Town & Country Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 101 of the 1972 Local Government Act to establish formal joint committees. There is no casting vote for the chairman to give all parties equal representation.
- 5.11 Trevor Saunders: experience of joint working between Mid Beds and Bedford Borough Council on the Wixams development. Prepared joint design briefs and codes and now deal with any cross-boundary planning applications jointly. Would look positively on a joint committee for the SE SDA as long as there was no casting vote.
- 5.12 Cllr Paternoster: Aylesbury Vale similarly has experience of joint working with South Northamptonshire over Silverstone – joint development brief with each local authority dealing with planning applications in their own area. A similar approach could be followed for the SW SDA.

- 5.13 Andrew Peck: a united front is needed in order to maximise the community benefits arising from the developments. So the sooner that joint working arrangements are agreed the better. This approach was supported by Malcolm Brighton and Cllrs Tallack and McCall who recognised the need for cross boundary work to agree infrastructure requirements
- 5.14 Cllr Chapman: Officers could do further work to identify the key cross-boundary issues and identify who is involved in each of them, together with a programme for work to be carried out.
- 5.15 Cllr Paternoster: Bucks CC and Aylesbury Vale will get work underway on cross boundary issues affecting the SW SDA – they are keen to work collaboratively on the MK transport model.

**MKC  
MKC,  
AVDC,  
MBDC**

**ACTION:**

- Invite Aylesbury Vale Advantage to future meetings
- Agreed that officers should identify the areas of work that need doing, who is involved and how the work is to be carried out. This work programme should include a timetable of key dates and milestones. The programme needs to include joint working on infrastructure requirements for the SDAs to ensure that there is good provision for all services, including hospital services
- Joint working approach to be reviewed at the meeting every 6 months.

**6 East-West Rail update**

- 6.1 Sheila Keene introduced the item. GRIP 3 stage outlined the feasibility and business case to reopen the Oxford to Milton Keynes service and the Aylesbury to Milton Keynes spur on the basis of 2 trains per hour. Currently scoping further stages including testing options for signalling and track improvements.

Presentation from Patrick O’Sullivan

- 6.2 Considerable amount of growth in the East-West rail corridor – some 100,000 dwellings will help to provide funding for the project via a Tariff approach / Section 106 agreements. .

6.3

The preferred option is for:

- one fast train per hour between Milton Keynes and Oxford.
- semi-fast trains running from Oxford to Bletchley.
- new stations at Winslow, Newton Longville and Aylesbury Parkway
- one train per hour between Aylesbury and Milton Keynes
- one train every 2 hours between Bedford and Bletchley.

6.4

New developments include:

- a strategic freight route Oxford to Bletchley
- looking at possibility of an inter-regional passenger service – 2013 onwards.

- Oxford station to be resignalled in 2017 – looking to see if Network Rail can bring this forward.
- Level crossings need to be reviewed and replaced
- Working with Network Rail on the design specification - work to be funded by the rail industry.
- Working group chaired by Sheila Keene looking at the funding strategy and possible Tariff approach
- The project is not reliant on the three eco-towns in the area coming forward but clearly these factors which need to be included in all options.

6.5 Key dates- GRIP4 will be commissioned in September 2008 and work completed by November 2009.

**MKP**

**ITEM NOTED – No action required**

**7 Eco-Towns**

- 7.1 Trevor Saunders introduced the item: 2 proposed eco-towns in Mid Beds – a Bedford-centric proposal from Gallaghers and a proposal from O&H Properties along the Marston Vale.
- 7.2 MBDC have met with Caroline Flint (Housing Minister) but are unable to support the proposals until they have some answers to issues such as: how to make the development more comprehensive; coalescence with Milton Keynes and the SE SDA; whether the standard of development will provide the exemplar product that the government is seeking. A report to Council on the proposals is available on MBDC's website
- 7.3 Ian Haynes: MKC have prepared a report on the proposals – going to Cabinet on 24 June. Raises similar issues to MBDC's, including can the eco towns be delivered in the timescale that the government is proposing; the democratic deficit; links to Milton Keynes; will proposals frustrate or further the East West rail case?
- 7.4 Much common ground from all parties. Draft PPS due in July.
- 7.5 Mark Williams: SEERA have responded on the proposals affecting the South East. Very similar issues to those already discussed. Notably only one of the 15 short listed eco towns has any kind of fit with a Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 7.6 Marcus Rogers: aware that Cherwell District Council are a strong advocate of East-West rail as long as it is not connected to the Western Otmoor eco town proposals.
- 7.7 Andy Barton: Aylesbury Vale likely to receive a hostile proposal for a site that hasn't been short listed.

7.8 Sheila Keene: MKP's response will suggest that if any of the eco towns along the East-West rail route get the go ahead, then further work will need to be done by MKP on behalf of the East West rail Consortium to review their implications and build in any changes to the project.

7.9 Marcus Rogers: East-West rail will only pick up around 15% of the eco towns' travel demands.

**ITEM NOTED – No action required**

**8 AOB: Date of next meeting**

9.1 Next meeting - Monday 8 September, 12-2pm at MKP offices.

Provisional items (MKC to circulate draft agenda):

- South East Plan: Proposed Changes
- Presentation from the Milton Keynes Parks Trust.
- Programme of issues requiring cross-boundary working

**MKC**